Met Office

January 2004

The averaging period used for the following assessment was 1961-1990.

UK overview

Another mild month across the UK. Rainfall was above average across most areas, with eastern areas receiving well above average. The best of the sunshine was in the south and east, with northwestern having less than average sunshine.

28 cm of snow was recorded at Glenlivet (Moray) on the 29th. Scampton (Lincs) reported -8.0 °C on the 28th.

England and Wales diary of highlights

Unsettled, wet and windy. Mostly mild, but colder with snow towards the end of the month.

1st - 3rd The month commenced rather cold and changeable with some rain, drizzle and snow over high ground in the north. Redhill (Surrey) fell to -6.7 °C early on the 3rd.

4th to 6th High pressure to the south gave mild or very mild conditions and some hill and coastal fog at first. Rain or drizzle on the 5th gave way to scattered showers later on the 6th.

7th to 13th Very unsettled as vigorous depressions swept their associated fronts across the region, mostly mild or very mild at first. A low crossed the Scottish Borders on the 8th bringing gales to many places and a few thundery showers on the 9th. Teignmouth in Devon reached 13.6 °C on the 10th. A deep depression brought gales and lower temperatures with some thundery showers on the 11th with a waterspout observed in the Bristol Channel. More rain or blustery showers on the 12th and 13th as another depression tracked close by.

14th to 18th Snow fell in the Midlands and north on the 14th with up to 5 cm in places and as much as 15 cm over high ground in Wales. Another deep depression crossed northern England during the 15th and 16th bringing widespread gales. Further snow fell over high ground in the north allowing 20 cm to accumulate at Boltshope Park later on the 15th. As low pressure transferred south-east it became colder everywhere with some overnight frost.

19th to 25th Mostly mild or very mild, but changeable with rain at times as complex low pressure to the north of the UK pushed weak fronts across the region. It was mainly cloudy with some hill and coastal fog on the 21st and 23rd. The 22nd and 23rd were generally wet, however, along the north coast of Wales, Colwyn Bay reached 13.6 °C on the 22nd. In contrast the 24th and 25th brought long sunny periods, lower temperatures and a few showers.

26th to 28th After a rather cold cloudy day on the 26th an arctic airstream brought snowfall to northern areas, affecting eastern coastal counties and the south-east later on the 27th. During the 28th another band of snow gathered strength over the Midlands as it migrated southwards, reaching the Home Counties during the rush hour. The passage of this front produced squalls, a sudden drop in temperature and a period of heavy snow which, in many places, settled quickly (even in central London where 2 to 4 cm fell). There were also many reports of thunder and lightning. North Wales, north-east England, the Lincolnshire Wolds and parts of East Anglia had significant falls, with depths up to 15 cm in places. Transport links were seriously disrupted in many regions. Scampton/Lincs recorded -8.0 °C on the 28th.

29th to 31st After a sunny, but cold start on the 29th, heavy rain and gales swept across the region from the west.

Scotland diary of highlights

Some snow, but mild overall.

The Hogmanay storm was still affecting Shetland on New Year's Day, giving 33 mm of precipitation at Sella Ness. It also left snow on the ground in some central and eastern districts. Generally quiet weather prevailed for the next few days - cold inland on the 2nd but fairly mild and cloudy on the 3rd and 4th.

From the 5th to the 10th low pressure in the Atlantic brought mild and changeable weather to Scotland. There were periods of rain or showers, mostly in the west, but it was windy for much of the time. There was 57 mm of rain at Sloy on the 8th and a gust of 78 m.p.h. at South Uist on the 10th.

Low pressure remained to the north of Scotland from the 11th to the 17th maintaining a flow of westerly winds with frequent showers in the west. However, the air was drawn from high latitudes and it was cold enough for snow on high ground, with large amounts accumulating over the western Highlands.

A complete change in the weather took place on the 18th as very mild and humid air tracking around an anticyclone near Biscay reached Scotland from the north-west. There was sustained heavy rain over the north-west, with 54 mm at Cassley on the 18th and 45 mm at Loch Glascarnoch on the 19th. On this day the temperature reached 14 °C at Strathallan and Leuchars. Mild and cloudy weather, with further rain in the west, continued until the 23rd.

On the 24th, colder air arrived from the north and prevailed until the end of the month. Snow showers extended to lower altitudes and reached sea level in the north by the 27th. They were driven south on the 28th by strong northerly winds with a gust of 69 m.p.h. at Fair Isle. Most places received some snow on that day and there were blizzards in the north with 28 cm of snow at Glenlivet. Thereafter it became somewhat milder but on 31st a depression tracked east across northern England and brought heavy rain or snow to the southern half of the country. There was 62 mm of precipitation at Eskdalemuir.

Northern Ireland diary of highlights

Generally mild. Dull and wet in the west and north-west.

1st to 10th
Generally mild with only slight frosts on a few nights. Quite wet across western areas between the 8th and 10th.

11th to 17th
Cooler with wintry showers and frequent overnight slight frosts. Very sunny on the 11th.

18th to 23rd
Very mild again with no night frosts. Quite dry but also persistently dull.

24th to 29th
Cold with some wintry showers around and with widespread overnight frosts.

30th to 31st
Overcast with widespread heavy rain at times.

Last updated: 27 February 2013